

THE ANCHOR NO. 1294

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MAY 21, 1876,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters into that within the veil; where the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.”
Hebrews 6:17-20.*

FAITH is the divinely-appointed way of receiving the blessings of grace. “He that believes shall be saved,” is one of the main declarations of the gospel. The wonders of creation, the discoveries of revelation, and the movements of providence are all intended to create and foster the principle of faith in the living God. If God reveals anything it is that we should believe it; of all the books of Holy Scripture it may be said, “These are written that you might believe, and that believing you might have life.” Even if God conceals anything, it is that we may be able to confide in Him; since what we *know* yields but little space for trust compared with the *unknown*. Providence sends us many different trials; all meant to exercise and increase our faith, and at the same time in answer to prayer it brings us varied proofs of the divine faithfulness which serve as refreshments to our faith. Thus the works and the words of God cooperate to educate men in the grace of faith. You might imagine, however, from the doctrine of certain teachers that the gospel is “Whoever *doubts* shall be saved,” and that nothing could be more useful or honorable than for a man’s mind to hang in perpetual suspense, sure of nothing, confident of the truth of no one, not even of God Himself! The Bible raises a mausoleum to the memory of its heroes, and writes upon it as their epitaph “these all died in faith”; but the *modern* gospel derides faith, and sets up instead the new virtue of keeping abreast with the freshest thought of the age! That simple trust in the truthfulness of God’s word, which our fathers inculcated as the basis of all religion, would seem to be at a discount now with “men of mind” who are able to cope with “modern thought.” Shame upon professed ministers of Christ that some of these are worshipping at this shrine, and are laboring after the repute of being intellectual and philosophical by scattering doubts on all sides! The doctrine of the blessedness of *doubt* is as opposed to the gospel of Jesus Christ as darkness is to light, or Satan to Christ Himself; it is invented as a quietus to the consciences of those proud men who refuse to yield their minds to the rule of God.

Have faith in God, for faith is in itself a virtue of the highest order, and no virtue is more truly excellent than the simple confidence in the eternal which a man is helped to exhibit by the grace of the Holy Spirit. No, not only is faith a *virtue* in itself, but it is the mother of all virtues. He that believes becomes strong to labor, patient to suffer, fervent to love, earnest to obey, zealous to serve. Faith is a root from which may grow all that can adorn the human character; so far from being opposed to good works, it is the ever-flowing fountain from where they proceed. Take faith away from the professed Christian, and you have cut the sinew of his strength; like Samson you have shorn him of his locks, and left him with no power either to defend him or to conquer his foes. “The just shall live by faith”—FAITH is essential to the vitality of Christianity, and anything which weakens that faith weakens the very mainspring of spiritual power! Brothers and sisters, not only does our own experience teach us this, and the word of God declare it, but the whole of human history goes to show the same truth of God. Faith is force. Why, even when men have been mistaken, if they have believed the mistake they have displayed more power than men who have known the truth, but have not heartily believed it; for the force that a man has in dealing with his fellow men lies very much in the force of conviction which his beliefs have over his own soul. Teach a man the truth of God so that his whole heart believes in it, and you have given him both the fulcrum and the lever with which he may move the world!

To this very moment the whole earth is tremulous like a mass of jelly beneath the tread of Luther, and why? Because he was strong in faith! Luther was a believer in the word of God, and the schoolmen with whom he had to contend were mere disputers; the priests, and cardinals, and popes with whom Luther came into contact were mere traders in dead traditions, therefore he smote them hip and thigh, with great slaughter. His whole manhood believed in what he had learned of God—and as an iron rod among potters' vessels, so was he among the pretenders of his age! What has been true in history all along is most certainly true now; it is by believing that we become strong—that is clear enough. Whatever supposed excellences there may be in the much vaunted receptive condition of the mind, the equilibrium of a cultured intellect, and the unsettled judgment of “honest” disbelief, I am unable to discern them, and I see no reference to them in Scripture. Holy Writ neither offers commendations of unbelief nor presents motives nor reasons for its cultivation. Experience does not prove it to be strength in life's battle, or wisdom for life's labyrinth. It is near akin to credulity, and unlike true faith, it is prone to be led by the nose by any falsehood. Unbelief yields no consolation for the present, and its outlook for the future is by no means comforting. We discover no intimation of a sublime cloud-land, where men of self appreciating brain power will eternally puzzle themselves and others; we hear no prophecy of a celestial hall of science where skeptics may weave fresh sophistries, and forge new objections to the revelation of God. *There is a place for the unbelieving, but it is not heaven!*

Coming to our text, whose tone is far removed from all uncertainty, we see clearly that the Lord does not desire us to be in an unsettled condition, but would put an end to all uncertainty and questioning. As among men a fact is established when an honest man has sworn to it, so “God willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath.” Condescending to the weakness of human faith, He Himself swears to what He declares, and thus gives us a gospel *doubly* certified by the promise and oath of the everlasting God! Surely angels must have wondered when God lifted His hand to heaven to swear to what He had promised, and must have concluded that from then on there would be an end of all strife because of the confirmation which the Lord thus gave to His covenant.

In working out our text, I must direct you to its most conspicuous metaphor. This world is like a sea—restless, unstable, dangerous, and never at one stay. Human affairs may be compared to waves driven with the wind and tossed. As for ourselves, we are the ships which go upon the sea, and are subject to its changes and motions; we are apt to be drifted by currents, driven by winds, and tossed with tempests. We have not yet come to the true *terra firma*, the rest which remains for the people of God. God would not have us carried about with every wind, and therefore He has been pleased to fashion for us an anchor of hope most sure and steadfast, so that we may outride the storm. I shall not attempt to preach from the whole of the great text before us, for it would require at least seven years, and a Dr. John Owen, or a Joseph Caryl to bring forth a tenth of its meaning! I am simply going to work out the one set of the truths of God suggested by the image of an anchor, and may God grant that all of us this morning who know the meaning of that anchor may feel it holding us fast by its grip within the veil! And may others who have never possessed that anchor before be enabled to cast it overboard this morning, for the first time, and feel throughout all the rest of their lives the strong consolation which such a holdfast is sure to bestow upon the believing heart!

I. First, let me call your attention to THE DESIGN OF THE ANCHOR of which our text speaks.

The design of an anchor, of course, is to hold a vessel firmly to one place when winds and currents would otherwise remove it. God has given us certain truths which are intended to hold our minds fast to truths of God, holiness, and His perseverance—in a word, to hold us to Him. But why hold the vessel? The first answer which would suggest itself would be *to keep it from being wrecked*. The ship may not need an anchor in calm waters, when upon a broad ocean a little drifting may not be a very serious matter, but there are conditions of weather in which an anchor becomes altogether essential. When a gale is rushing towards the shore, blowing great guns and the vessel cannot hold her course, and must surely be driven upon an iron-bound coast, and then an anchor is worth its weight in gold! If the good ship cannot be anchored there will be nothing left of her in a very short time except for here and there a spar; the gallant vessel will go to pieces, and every mariner drowned; now is the time to let down the anchor, the best bower anchor if you will, and let the good ship defy the wind. Our God does not intend His people to be shipwrecked—shipwrecked and lost forever; however, they would be if they were not held fast in the hour of temptation. Brothers and sisters, if every wind of doctrine whirled you about at its will, you would soon be drifted far away from the truth as it is in Jesus—and concerning it you would make ship-

wreck; but you cost your Lord too dear for Him to lose you; He bought you at too great a price, and sets too great a store by you for Him to see you broken to pieces on the rocks; therefore He has provided for you a glorious holdfast, that when Satan's temptations, your own corruptions, and the trials of the world assail you, *hope* may be the anchor of your soul both sure and steadfast. How much we need it! For we see others fall into the error of the wicked, overcome by the deceivableness of unrighteousness, and left forever as castaways. "Having no hope and without God in the world." If you have done business on the great waters for any length of time, you must be well aware that were it not for everlasting truths of God which hold you fast, your soul had long since been hurried into everlasting darkness, and the proud waters had long before this have gone over your soul. When the mighty waves have lifted themselves up your poor boat has seemed to go down to the bottom of the mountains, and had it not been for His unchanging Love and immutable faithfulness, your heart had utterly fainted. Nevertheless here you are today convoyed by grace, provisioned by mercy, steered by heavenly Wisdom, and propelled by celestial power! Thanks to the anchor, or rather to the God who gave it to you, no storm has overwhelmed you; you are under way for the port of glory!

An anchor is also needed to keep a vessel from discomfort, for even if it is not wrecked, it would be a wretched thing to be driven here and there, to the north, and then to the south, as winds may shift. Unhappy is he who is the creature of external influences, flying along like thistledown in the breeze, or a rolling thing before the whirlwind! We require an anchor to hold us so that we may abide in peace, and find rest unto our souls. Blessed be God there are solid and sure truths, infallibly certified to us which operate powerfully upon the mind so as to prevent its being harassed and dismayed. The text speaks of "strong consolation"; is not that a glorious word—we have not merely consolation which will hold us fast, and bear us up against the tempest in times of trouble, but *strong consolation*, so that when affliction bursts forth with unusual strength like a furious tornado, the strong consolation like a sheet anchor, may be more than a match for the strong temptation, and may enable us to triumph over all. Very restful is that man who is very believing—

*"Hallelujah! I believe!
Now the giddy world stands fast,
For my soul has found an anchor
Till the night of storm is past."*

An anchor is also needed *to preserve us from losing the headway which we have made*. The vessel has been making good way towards port, but the wind changes and blows in her teeth; she will be borne to the port from which she started, or to an equally undesirable port unless she can resist the foul wind! Therefore she puts down her anchor. The captain says to himself, "I have got so far, and I am not going to be drifted back; down goes my anchor, and here I stop." Saints are sometimes tempted to return to the country from where they came—they are half inclined to renounce the things which they have learned, and to conclude that they never were taught of the Lord at all. Alas, old Adam and Satan endeavor to drive us back, and were it not for something sure to hold to, back we would go. If it could be proven to be as certain cultivated teachers would have us believe, that there is nothing very sure, although black is black, it is not very black, and though white is white, it is not very white. If it could be proven that from certain standpoints there is no doubt black is *white*, and white is *black*; if it could be proven, I say, that there are no divine certainties, no infallible truths—then we might willingly surrender what we know or *think* we know, and wander about on the ocean of speculation—the waifs and strays of mere opinion! But while we have the truth of God taught to our very souls by the Holy Spirit, we cannot drift from it, nor will we though men count us fools for our steadfastness. Brothers and sisters aspire not to the charity which grows out of uncertainty; there are saving truths of God, and there are "damnable heresies." Jesus Christ is not yes and no; His gospel is not a cunning mixture of the gall of hell, and the honey of heaven flavored to the taste of bad and good. There are fixed principles and revealed facts. Those who know anything experimentally about divine things have cast their anchor down, and as they hear the chain running out, they joyfully say, "This I know, and have believed; in this truth I stand fast and immovable; winds may blow and crack their cheeks, but they will never move me from this anchorage; whatever I have attained by the teaching of the Spirit, I will hold fast as long as I live."

Moreover, the anchor is needed *that we may possess constancy and usefulness*. The man who is easily moved and believes this today and that tomorrow, is a fickle creature; who knows where to find him? Of what use is he to the younger sort and the feeble folk, or indeed to anyone? Like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed, what service can he render in the work of the Lord, and how can he in-

fluence others for good? He believes not! How can he make others believe? I believe that the orthodox *disbeliever* is more largely a creator of infidelity than the heterodox believer—in other words I fear that the man who earnestly believes an error has a less injurious influence upon others than the man who holds the truth of God in indifference, and secret unbelief; this man is tolerated in godly company, for he professes to be one of ourselves, and he is therefore able to stab at piety beneath her shield. The man knows nothing, certainly, but only hopes and trusts, and when defending truth, he allows that much may be said on the other side, so that he kisses and stabs at the same time.

Our God has provided us an anchor to hold us fast lest we be shipwrecked, lest we be unhappy, lest we lose the progress we have made, and lest our character should become unstable, and therefore useless. These purposes are kind and wise; let us bless the Lord who has so graciously cared for us.

II. Secondly, I invite you to consider THE MAKE OF THE ANCHOR—“That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation.”

Anchor-making is very important work. The anchor-smith has a very responsible business, for if he makes his anchor badly, or of weak material, woe to the shipmaster when the storm comes! Anchors are not made of cast iron, nor of every kind of metal that comes to hand, but they are made of *worked* iron, strongly welded, and of tough, compact material, which will bear all the strain that is likely to come upon it at the worst of times. If anything in this world should be strong, it should be an anchor, for upon it safety and life often depend. What is our anchor? It has two great blades or flukes to it, each of which acts as a holdfast. It is made of two *divine things*. The one is *God’s promise*, a sure and stable thing indeed! We are very ready to take a good man’s promise, but perhaps the good man may forget to fulfill it, or be unable to do so, but neither of these things can occur with the Lord—He cannot forget, and He cannot fail to do as He has said. Jehovah’s promise, what a certain thing it must be; if you had nothing but the Lord’s bare word to trust to, surely your faith should never stagger! To this sure word is added another divine thing, namely, *God’s oath*. Beloved, I scarcely dare speak upon this sacred topic; God’s oath, His solemn assertion, His swearing by Himself. Conceive the majesty, the awe, the certainty of this! Here then are two divine assurances, which like the flukes of the anchor hold us fast. Who dares doubt the promise of God? Who can have the audacity to distrust His oath?

We have for our anchor two things, which, in addition to their being divine, are expressly said to be immutable—that is, two things which cannot change. When the Lord utters a promise He never runs back from it—“the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” Has He said and shall He not do it? Has He promised and shall it not stand fast? He never changes, and His promise abides from generation to generation. Then comes the oath, which is the other immutable thing; how could that be altered? God has pledged the honor of His name, and it is not supposable that under such circumstances, He will retract His engagements, and deny His own declarations! Ah, no—

*“The gospel bears my spirit up.
A faithful and unchanging God
Lays the foundation for my hope
In oaths, and promises, and blood.”*

Notice next of these two things that is said—“Wherein it is impossible for God to lie.” It is inconsistent with the very idea and thought of God that He should be a liar. A lying God would be a mistake in *language*, a self-evident contradiction. It cannot be, God must be true—true in His nature, true in His thoughts, true in His designs, true in His acts, and assuredly true in His promises and true in His oaths. “Wherein it is impossible for God to lie”; oh, beloved, what blessed holdfasts have we here! If hope cannot rest on such assurances, what could it rest upon?

But now, what is this promise, and what is this oath? The promise is the promise given to Abraham that his seed should be blessed, and in this seed should all nations of the earth be blessed, also. To whom was this promise made? Who are the “seed”? In the first place, the Seed is Jesus, who blesses all nations, and next, our apostle has proved that this promise was not made to the seed according to the flesh, but to the seed according to the spirit. Who, then, are the seed of Abraham according to the spirit? Why, believers; for He is the father of the faithful, and God’s promise, therefore, is confirmed to all who exhibit the faith of believing Abraham. To Christ Himself, and to all who are in Christ, is the covenant made sure, that the Lord will bless them forever and make them blessings.

And what is the oath? That may refer to the oath which the Lord swore to Abraham after the patriarch had offered up his son, for which see the 22nd chapter of Genesis. But I think you will agree with me if I say it more probably refers to the oath recorded in the 110th Psalm, which I would have you no-

tice very carefully—"The Lord has sworn, and will not repent, You are a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." I think this is referred to because the 20th verse of our text goes on to say, "Where the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." Now, beloved, I want you to see this anchor. Here is one of its holdfasts—God has promised to bless the faithful; He has declared that the seed of Abraham, namely believers, shall be blessed, and made a blessing. Then comes the other arm of the anchor which is equally strong to hold the soul, namely, the oath of the priesthood, by which the Lord Jesus is declared to be a priest forever on our behalf; not an ordinary priest after the manner of Aaron, beginning and ending a temporary priesthood—but without beginning of days or end of years, living on forever! Jesus is a priest who has finished His sacrificial work, has gone in within the veil, and sits down forever at the right hand of God, because His work is complete, and His priesthood abides in its eternal efficacy! This is a blessed anchor to the soul—to know that my priest is within the veil; to know that my King of righteousness and King of peace is before the throne of God for me, representing me, and therefore I am forever secure in Him. What better anchor could the Comforter Himself devise for His people? What stronger consolation can the heirs of promise desire?

III. We have no time to linger, though tempted to do so, and therefore I ask you to advance in the third place to notice OUR HOLD OF THE ANCHOR. It would be of no use for us to have an anchor, however good, unless we had a hold of it. The anchor may be sure, and may have a steadfast grip, but there must be a strong cable to connect the anchor with the ship. Formerly it was very common to use a hemp cable, but large vessels are not content to run the risk of breakage, and therefore they use a chain cable for the anchor. It is a grand thing to have a solid substantial connection between your soul and your hope; to have a confidence which is surely your own, from which you can never be separated!

Our text speaks plainly about this laying hold of the anchor in the end of the 18th verse—"That we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." We must personally lay hold on the hope; there is the hope, but we are bound to grasp it and hold it fast. As with an anchor, the cable must pass through the ring, and so be bound to it, and so must faith lay hold upon the hope of eternal life! The original Greek signifies "to lay hold by main force, and so to hold as not to lose our hold when the greatest force would pull it from us." We must take firm hold of the firm truth of God! Ah, brothers and sisters, as some men have a cloudy hope; they would seem to have a very doubtful way of laying hold upon it. I suppose it is natural it should be so. For my part, I desire to be taught something certain, and then I pray to be certain that I have learned it. Oh to get such a grip of the truth of God as that old warrior had of his sword, so that when he fought and conquered he could not separate his hand and his sword, for his hand clung to his sword as if it were glued to it! It is a blessed thing to get hold of the doctrine of Christ in such a way that you would have to be dismembered before it could be taken from you, for it has grown into your very self! Mind you have a sure hold of your sure anchor!

"Well," says one, "but *may we* lay hold upon it"? My answer is, the text says it is "set before us"—to, "lay hold of the hope set before us." You may grasp it for it is set before you! If any of you were very faint and hungry, and came to a person's house, and he said "Sit down," and you sat down at the table, and when you sat there, the master set before you a good piece of meat and some very pleasant fruits, and the like, you would not long question whether you might eat them, but would infer your liberty to do so because the food was set before you! Assuredly this is the welcome of the gospel! The hope is set before you! For what purpose is it so set? That you may turn your back upon it? Assuredly not! Lay hold upon it, for wherever truth of God is met with, it is both our *duty* and our *privilege* to lay hold upon it. The entire guarantee that a sinner needs for laying hold on Christ is found in the fact that God has set Christ forth to be a propitiation for our sins! Christian, you are in a storm—here is an anchor! Do you ask, "May I use that anchor"? It is set before you for that very purpose! I guarantee you there is no captain here but what if he were in a storm, and saw an anchor set before him, he would use it at once and ask no questions. The anchor might be none of his; it might happen to be on board as a piece of merchandise—he would not care an atom about that! "The ship has got to be saved; here is an anchor; over it goes!" Act thus with the gracious hope which God provides for you in the gospel of Jesus Christ; lay hold on it now and evermore

Now, notice that our hold on the anchor should be a present thing and a conscious matter, for we read, "which hope we *have*." We are conscious that we have it. No one among us has any right to be at peace if he does not know that he has obtained a good hope through grace. May you all be able to say, "which hope we *have*."

As it is well to have a cable made of the same metal as the anchor, so it is a blessed thing when our faith is of the same divine character as the truth of God upon which it lays hold. It needs a God-given hope on our part to seize the God-given promise of which our hope is made! The right mode of procedure is to grasp God's promise with a God-created confidence; then you see that right away down from the vessel to the anchor the holdfast is all of one piece, so that at every point it is equally adapted to bear the strain. O to have precious faith in a precious Christ! A precious confidence in precious blood! God grant it to you, and may you exercise it at this very moment!

IV. Fourthly, and very briefly, let us speak of THE ANCHOR'S HOLD OF US. A ship has hold upon her anchor by her chain cable, but at the same time the most important thing is that the anchor keeps its hold upon the ship, and so, because it has entered into the ground at the bottom of the sea, holds the vessel hard and fast. Brothers and sisters, do you know anything about your hope holding you? It will hold you if it is a *good* hope; you will not be able to get away from it! Under temptation, depression of spirit, trial and affliction, you will not only hold your hope—that is your *duty*, but your hope will hold you—that is your *privilege*! When the devil tempts you to say, “I will give it all up,” an unseen power will speak out of the infinite deeps, and will reply, “But I shall not give *you* up; I have a hold of you, and nothing shall separate us.” Brothers and sisters, our security depends far more upon *God's holding* us than our holding onto Him. Our hope in God, that He will fulfill His oath and promise, has a mighty power over us—far more than equal to all the efforts of the world, the flesh, and the devil to drag us away!

How is it that our divine anchor holds so fast? It is because it is, in its own nature, sure—“Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both *sure* and steadfast.” It is, in itself, sure as to its nature. The gospel is no cunningly devised fable—God has spoken it; it is a mass of fact; it is pure, unalloyed truth with the broad seal of God Himself set upon it. Then, too, this anchor is “*steadfast*” as to its hold. It never moves from its lodgment. It is sure in its nature, and steadfast when in use, and therefore it is practically safe. If you have believed in Christ unto eternal Life, and are expecting that God will be as good as His word, have you not found that your hope sustains you and maintains you in your position?

Brothers and sisters, the result of the use of this anchor will be very comfortable to you. “Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast.” It will not prevent your being tossed about, for a ship at anchor may rock a good deal, and the passengers may be very seasick, but she cannot be driven away from her moorings! There she is, and her passengers suffer discomfort, but they shall not suffer shipwreck! A good hope through grace will not altogether deliver you from inward conflicts, no, it will even *involve* them; it will not screen you from outward trials—it will be sure to *bring* them; but it will save you from all real peril. I may say to every believer in Jesus that his condition is very like that of the landsman on board ship when the sea was rather rough, and he said, “Captain, we are in great danger, are we not”? As an answer did not come, he said, “Captain, don't you see great fear?” Then the old seaman gruffly replied, “Yes, I see plenty of fear, but not a bit of danger.” It is often so with us; when the blinds are out and the storms are raging there is plenty of fear, but there is no danger. We may be much tossed, but we are quite safe, for we have an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast which will not move.

One blessed thing is that our hope has such a grip of us that we know it. In a vessel you feel the pull of the anchor, and the more the wind rages the more you feel that the anchor holds you. Like the boy with his kite—the kite is up in the clouds where he cannot see it, but he knows it is there, for he feels it pull; so our good hope has gone up to heaven, and He is pulling and drawing us to Him. We cannot see our anchor, it would be of no use if we *could* see it; its use begins when it is out of sight, but it pulls, and we can feel the heavenly pressure!

V. And now, lastly, and best of all, THE ANCHOR'S UNSEEN GRIP, “which enters into that within the veil.” Our anchor is like every other—when it is of any use it is out of sight. When a man sees the anchor, it is doing nothing, unless it happens to be some small stream anchor or in shallow water. When the anchor is of use it is *gone*—there it went overboard with a splash! Far down there, all among the fish, lies the iron holdfast, quite out of sight. Where is your hope, brothers and sisters? Do you believe because you can *see*? That is not believing at all! Do you believe because you can *feel*? That is *feeling*, it is not believing! But “blessed is he that has not seen, and yet has believed.” Blessed is he who believes against his feelings, yes, and hopes against hope! That is a strange thing to do, hoping against hope, believing things impossible, and seeing things invisible. He who can do that has learned the art of faith! Our hope is not seen; He lies in the waves, or, as the text says, “within the veil.” I am not going to run

the figure too closely, but a mariner might say that his anchor is within the watery veil, for a veil of water is between him and it, and so it is concealed. Such is the confidence which we have in God, whom having not seen we love—

*“Let the winds blow, and billows roll,
Hope is the anchor of my soul!
But can I by so slight a tie,
An unseen hope, on God rely?
Steadfast and sure, it cannot fail,
It enters deep within the veil,
It fastens on a land unknown,
And moors me to my Father’s throne.”*

Although our anchor is out of sight, yet thank God He has taken a very firm grip, and “entered into that which is within the veil.” What hold can be equal to that which a man has upon his God when he can cry, “You have promised, therefore do as You have said”? What grasp is firmer than this, “Lord, You have sworn it, You can not run back. You have said that he that believes in You is justified from all sin. Lord, I believe You, therefore be pleased to do as You have said. I know You cannot lie, and You have sworn that Christ is a priest forever. I am resting in Him as my priest who has made a full atonement for me. I therefore hold You to Your oath—accept me for the sake of Jesus’ sacrifice. Can You reject a soul for whom Your own Son is pleading? He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto You by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for me—my Lord, this is the hold I have upon You, this is the anchor which I have cast into the deep, mysterious attributes of Your wondrous nature! I believe You, and You will not make me ashamed of my hope.” Oh, brothers and sisters, what a hold you have upon the living God when you rely on His oath and promise! Thus you hold Him as Jacob held the angel, and the blessing you will surely win at His hands.

Note next, that when an anchor has a good grip down below, the more the ship drags the tighter its hold becomes. At first, when the anchor goes down, perhaps it drops upon a hard rock, and there it cannot bite, but by-and-by it slips off from the rock, and enters into the bottom of the sea. It digs into the soil, and as the cable draws it on, it goes deeper and deeper till the anchor almost buries itself; and the more it is pulled upon the deeper it descends. The anchor gets such a hold at last that it seems to say, “Now, Boreas, blow away, you must tear up the floor of the sea before the vessel shall be let go.” Times of trouble send our hope deep down into fundamental truths of God. Some of you people who have never known friction, you rich people who have never known need, you healthy folks who were never ill a week—you have not half a grip of the glorious hope that the tried ones have! Much of the unbelief in the Christian Church comes out of the easy lives of professors. When you come to rough it, you need the solid gospel. A hard-working hungry man cannot live on your whipped creams, and your fine drinks—he must have something solid to nourish him, and so the tried man feels that he must have a gospel which is true, and he must believe it to be true, or else his soul will famish! Now, if God promises and swears, have we not the most solid of assurances? The firmest conceivable faith is no more than the righteous due of the thrice Holy and faithful God. Therefore, brothers and sisters, when greater trouble comes believe the more firmly, and when your vessel is tossed in deeper water believe the more confidently! When the head is aching, and the heart is palpitating, when all earthly joy is fled, and when death comes near, believe the more! Grow surer and surer that your Father cannot lie; yes, “Let God be true and every man a liar.” In this way you will obtain the strong consolation which the Lord intends you to enjoy.

The text concludes with this very sweet reflection, that though our hope is out of sight, we have a friend in the unseen land where our hope has found its hold. In anxious moments a sailor might almost wish that he could go with his anchor and fix it firmly. That he cannot do, but we have a friend who has gone to see to everything for us! Our anchor is within the veil—it is where we cannot see it—but Jesus is there, and our hope is inseparably connected with His person and work! We know of a certainty that Jesus of Nazareth, after His death and burial, rose from the grave, and that 40 days afterwards, in the presence of His disciples, He went up into heaven, and a cloud received Him. We know this as an historical fact, and we also know that He rose into heaven as the comprehensive seed of Abraham, in whom are found all the faithful. As He has gone there, we shall surely follow, for He is the first fruits of the full harvest. According to the text, our Lord Jesus has gone within the veil *as our high priest*. Now, the high priest within the veil is in the place of acceptance on our behalf. A Melchisedec high priest is one

who has boundless power to bless and to save unto the uttermost. Jesus Christ has offered one bloody sacrifice for sin, namely, Himself, and now He sits down at the right hand of God forever, even the Father. Brethren, He reigns where our anchor has entered! We rest in Christ's finished work, His resurrection power, and His eternal kingship. How can we doubt after this?

We are next informed that Jesus has gone within veil *as the forerunner*. What is a forerunner if there are not others to run after him? Jesus has gone to lead the way! He is the pioneer, the leader of the great army, the first fruits from the dead! And if He has gone to heaven as a forerunner, then we who belong to Him will follow after! Should not that reflection make our hearts glad?

We are told next that as the forerunner, our Lord has *for us* entered—that is entered to take possession in *our* name. When Jesus Christ went into heaven, He did as it were look around on all the thrones, and all the palms, and all the harps, and all the crowns, and said, "I take possession of all these in the name of My redeemed. I am their representative, and claim the heavenly places in their names." As surely as Jesus is there, the possessor of all things, so shall we also each one come to his inheritance in due time!

Our Lord Jesus by His intercession is drawing us to heaven, and we have only to wait a little while, and we shall be with Him where He is. He pleads for our home-bringing, and it will come to pass before long. No sailor likes his anchor to come home, for if it does so in a storm, matters look very ugly. Our anchor will never come home, but it is *drawing us home*! He is drawing us to Himself, not downwards beneath devouring waves, but upwards to ecstatic joys! Do you not feel it? You who are growing old, do you not feel its home-drawings? Many cords hold us here, but they are getting fewer with some of you—the dear wife has faded away, or the beloved husband has gone; many of your children have gone too, and a host of friends. These are all helps to draw you upward! I think at this very moment you must feel as if your boat were about to change by some magic power from a ship which floats the waters to an eagle which can fly the air! Have you not often longed to mount while singing—

"Oh that we now might grasp our guide!

Oh that the word were given!

Come, Lord of hosts, the waves divide,

And land us all in heaven!"

My cable has grown shorter of late, a great many of its links have vanished. I am nearer my hope than when I first believed. Every day hope nears fruition! Let our joy in it become more exultant. A few more weeks or months, and we shall dwell above, and while we shall need no anchor to hold us fast, we shall eternally bless that divine condescension which produced such a holdfast for our unstable minds while tossed upon this sea of care!

What will those of you do who have no anchor? A storm is coming on! I see the lowering clouds, and hear the distant hurricane! What will you do? May the Lord help you at once to flee for refuge to the hope set before you! Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—HEBREWS 6.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN IN BOOK"—230, 193, 632.

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